

**METHOD AND STRUCTURE FOR ELECTROSTATIC DISCHARGE
PROTECTION OF PHOTOMASKS**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A mask for manufacturing integrated circuits and use of the mask. The mask has a mask substrate. The mask also has an active mask region within a first portion of the mask substrate. The active region is adapted to accumulate a pre-determined level of static electricity. The mask also has a first guard ring structure surrounding a portion of the active mask region to isolate the active region from an outer region of the mask substrate and a second guard ring structure having at least one fuse structure surrounding a portion of the first guard ring structure. The fuse structure is operably coupled to the active region to absorb a current from static electricity. The static electricity is accumulated by the active region to the pre-determined level and being discharged as current to the fuse structure while maintaining the active region free from damage from the static electricity.

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